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TAGS: [PGOV PHUM NI MILITANTS](#)

SUBJECT: LEADERS OF YORUBA MILITIA GROUP ARRESTED

1. Summary: The leaders of two warring factions of the outlawed militant group Odua People's Congress (OPC), Fredrick Fasehun and Gani Adams, were charged by a Lagos Magistrate Court last week. OPC is the Yoruba militia responsible for violent communal clashes in Lagos and other parts of the Southwest. The prosecution charged Fasehun and Adams with six counts, including murder, arson, looting, unlawful assembly and illegal possession of arms. End Summary.

2. Adams and Fasehun were arrested October 21 in Lagos and briefly detained in Abuja. On 27 October, police in Lagos arraigned Fasehun, Adams and 11 others before an Igboere Magistrate Court, a precinct within Lagos metropolis. They were brought to the court amid tight security. Chief Magistrate Akintunde Isaac upheld the prosecution's application that the OPC leaders be remanded to prison to allow full investigations by the police into their violent activities during the recent communal conflicts in Lagos.

3. The OPC leaders are charged under Section 236 (3) of Criminal Procedure Law Cap C18, Volume 2 Laws of Lagos State. They are charged with committing the following offences:

---On 21 October, in Iyana-Ipaja, Lagos, the accused persons conspired to commit arson, murder, malicious damage to properties-offences punishable under Section 516 of the Criminal Code;

---They killed Sunday Ojo, Kehinde Obayemi, Alaba Alimi, Iduyatu Kareem and others yet to be identified;

---The accused persons set ablaze houses, vehicles and other valuable properties;

---They unlawfully assembled themselves and participated in a riot;

---They caused fear and harm to members of the public by openly carrying out firearms without license and;

---They managed the two factions of an unlawful body called the OPC, an offence punishable under Section 63 of the Lagos Criminal Code.⁸

The above charges if successfully proved carry many years of imprisonment without an option of fines.

4. The police clamped down on the OPC following bloody clashes between the two rival factions that paralyzed commercial and social activities in parts of Lagos two weeks ago. At least 8 people were reportedly killed while 50 vehicles and other valuable properties were destroyed as members of the militia battle each other for supremacy. Last week police also arrested at least 40 other members of the two OPC factions in Ajegunle and Ajamgbadi, two sprawling Lagos suburbs where these factions often flex their muscles.

5. COMMENT: Since 1999, the OPC has continued to unleash terror on hapless residents in Lagos and other parts of the Southwest in total disregard for Nigerian laws. These recent arrests may signal a strengthened resolve by the Nigerian authorities to decisively deal with troublemakers in the country. In the past, feeble attempts were made to clip the wings of the OPC leaders, but they turned out to be more empty rhetoric than any serious action. The OPC arrests also seem to be part of a wider trend of arrests of grassroots ethnic leaders from around Nigeria. Others recently arrested include Dokubo Asari, leader of a militant group from the Niger Delta, Ralph Uwazurike, one of the leaders of the Biafran separatist group MASSOB, and several dozen members of the Arewa Youth Congress in the north. Whether these arrests will eventually lead to any convictions remains to be seen. Post will continue to monitor this trend and report any significant developments.

CAMPBELL